

NEO-MEC

Northeast Ohio Medicaid Expansion Coalition

Medicaid Expansion: Reduce Uninsured and Provide Coverage to Ohio Veterans

Thousands of Ohio veterans—and their families—could gain health insurance and improve their health and well-being if the state makes the right decision to move forward with the Medicaid expansion now under consideration in Columbus.

Despite having put their health and lives at risk while serving in the armed forces, 1.3 million U.S. veterans—including 52,000 in Ohio—lack health insurance. Nationally, almost half of these veterans would qualify for coverage if all states expand Medicaid eligibility, a proposal currently included in the Kasich Administration's FY 2014-2015 budget proposal as a result of options provided for in the Affordable Care Act. Close to 26,000 Ohio veterans without insurance could qualify for Medicaid coverage if the state expands. Their spouses could gain needed coverage as well.

Ohio Veterans and their Families Could Benefit from Medicaid Expansion

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Newly Qualified for Medicaid*</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| Uninsured Veterans | 52,000 | 48.8% |
| Uninsured Family Members of Veterans | 35,000 | 35.5% |
| Veterans w/ VA Coverage Alone | 37,000 | 51.9% |

Most people believe that veterans can receive health care through the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), however that is not the case. Only about 37percent of the country's more than 22 million veterans' receive health coverage through the VA. Not all veterans can receive these benefits. Eligibility is determined by active duty status, condition of discharge, length of service, income level and other factors. Only in limited circumstances are veterans' spouses and families able to access VA health care.

Veterans without health insurance often have medical problems, many of which go untreated:

- One in three uninsured veterans report having at least one chronic health condition.
- Roughly 15 percent report being in only fair or poor health.
- More than 15 percent face significant physical, mental or emotional problems.
- Over 40 percent report having unmet medical needs.
- Roughly one third of uninsured veterans have delayed seeking needed health care due to cost.

Jennifer Haley and Genevieve M. Kenney, "Uninsured Veterans and Family Members: Who Are They and Where Do They Live?," Urban Institute, May 2012, <http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/reports/2012/rwjf73036>.

Kenneth W. Kizer, "Veterans and the Affordable Care Act," *Journal of the American Medical Association* (February 22,2012), pp 789-790.